

News Release



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MSHA fines American Coal Co. nearly \$1.5 million *Illinois-based Galatia Mine repeatedly flouted safety regulations*

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) announced it has assessed \$1.46 million in fines against American Coal Company's Galatia Mine in Saline Co., Ill. The mine is a subsidiary of Murray Energy Corp., which is controlled by Robert E. Murray. Nine violations were assessed under the flagrant violation provision of MSHA's civil penalty regulation.

"American Coal Co. repeatedly demonstrated its failure to comply with basic safety laws over a number of months, and for that it must be held accountable," said Richard E. Stickler, acting assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health.

On Sept. 6, 2007, an MSHA inspector observed a maintenance supervisor reach into an energized 480-volt electrical panel while an hourly employee stood next to him. The supervisor's hand came within inches of an uninsulated lug inside the panel. He stated he was aware that the panel was energized and he "... was just taking a shortcut." MSHA issued an unwarrantable failure order for failure to de-energize the panel before reaching inside, and the violation was assessed at \$161,800. "Shortcuts can cost lives," Stickler continued.

On Sept. 18, 2007, an MSHA inspector issued a high-negligence unwarrantable failure order to the operator for allowing coal and coal dust to accumulate around the tail roller of a conveyer belt, and for failure to remove previous coal and coal dust accumulations from around the tail roller. These conditions, which could create a fire or explosion hazard, were documented in the mine examiner's book for the four preceding shifts. Less than one week later, an MSHA inspector issued a high-negligence unwarrantable failure order over similar conditions on a different conveyer belt. Two violations for accumulation of combustible materials were assessed at \$179,300 and \$164,700.

On Nov. 7 and Dec. 5, 2007, an MSHA inspector issued two unwarrantable failure orders for failure to conduct adequate pre-shift examinations. The inspector observed accumulations of combustible materials and obvious loose, broken and unsupported roof that were neither recorded nor posted with a danger sign. These violations were assessed at \$161,800 and \$145,800.

On Nov. 8, an MSHA inspector issued an unwarrantable failure order for failure to support loose and broken roof along an escapeway. The violation was assessed at \$158,900.

On January 11, 13 and 24, 2008, MSHA issued three unwarrantable failure orders for accumulations of combustible materials. These violations were assessed at \$153,100, \$153,100 and \$188,000.

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